

***What is claimed is:***

- 1     1.     A protective guide for a connection zone formed at a connection between a fish tape and an  
2           object, comprising:  
3                 a means for encasing the connection zone and creating a smooth transition from the  
4           fish tape to the object, wherein said means for encasing has a hollow cavity, is adapted to be  
5           slidably disposed on the fish tape, and is of a shape and dimension for containing the  
6           connection zone within said hollow cavity.
- 1     2.     The protective guide of claim 1, wherein said means for encasing is a hollow tube having a  
2           length, a first end having a first opening with a first diameter, a second end having a second  
3           opening with a second diameter, an outer surface, and an inner surface, wherein said hollow  
4           tube tapers from said second end to said first end.
- 1     3.     The protective guide of claim 2, wherein said outer surface of said hollow tube is a non-stick  
2           surface.
- 1     4.     The protective guide of claim 3, wherein said outer surface is either made from or coated  
2           with a non-stick material selected from the group consisting of: chlorotrifluoroethylene  
3           (CTFE), polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE), and silicone polymers.
- 1     5.     The protective guide of claim 2, wherein said first end terminates in a point.
- 1     6.     The protective guide of claim 5, further comprising a slot in said first end and adapted for  
2           receiving an end of the fish tape.

- 1 7. The protective guide of claim 6, wherein said slot extends a predefined length from said first  
2 opening of said hollow tube toward said second end of said hollow tube wherein said second  
3 diameter is sufficiently large to accommodate the end of the fish tape.
- 1 8. The protective guide of claim 6, wherein said slot extends from said first end of said  
2 protective guide toward said second end of said protective guide only until a point where said  
3 second diameter of said hollow tube is sufficiently large to accommodate the end of the fish  
4 tape.
- 1 9. The protective guide of claim 2, further comprising one or more lateral slits in said second  
2 end of said hollow tube, each said lateral slit extending from said second opening toward said  
3 first end of said hollow tube a predefined length, thereby creating two or more sections, each  
4 said section extending a predefined length from said second opening at said second end of  
5 said hollow tube toward said first end.
- 1 10. The protective guide of claim 9, wherein said protective guide is made of a material allowing  
2 said sections to collapse and overlap on top of each other in response to external pressure  
3 exerted on said hollow tube.
- 1 11. The protective guide according to claim 2, wherein said protective guide is made of a  
2 material selected from the group consisting of: compressed wood fiber products, paper,  
3 leather, cloth, metal, plastic, composite materials, alloys, and combinations thereof.
- 1 12. The protective guide according to claim 2, wherein said hollow tube has a shape selected  
2 from the group consisting of generally conical, bullet, and bell.
- 1 13. The protective guide according to claim 2, wherein said hollow tube has a length about equal  
2 to and slightly longer than the connection zone between the fish tape and the object.

1 14. A method for encasing a connection zone formed where an end of a fish tape is joined to an  
2 object to be pulled through an opening, comprising the steps of:

3 (a) inserting an end of the fish tape into a first opening at a first end of a  
4 protective guide, said protective guide being a hollow tube generally conical in shape,  
5 wherein the end of the fish tape is within said hollow tube;

6 (b) pushing the fish tape through said first opening of said protective guide until  
7 the end of the fish tape passes through said hollow tube and comes out a second opening at  
8 a second end of said protective guide;

9 (c) joining the end of the fish tape to an end of the object, thereby forming the  
10 connection zone; and

11 (d) pulling the end of the fish tape toward said first opening of said protective  
12 guide such that the connection zone created in said step (c) is contained within said hollow  
13 tube.

1 15. The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of:

2 (e) feeding the end of the fish tape through an opening in a conduit prior to said  
3 step (a).

1 16. The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of:

2 (f) pulling the fish tape back out and through the opening in the conduit after said  
3 step (d).

1 17. The method of claim 16, further comprising the step of:

2 (g) removing the object from the end of the fish tape.

1 18. The method of claim 16, wherein said hollow tube has one or more lateral slits in said second  
2 end of said hollow tube, each said lateral slit extending from said second opening toward said

3 first end of said hollow tube a predefined length, thereby creating two or more sections, each  
4 said section extending a predefined length from said second opening at said second end of  
5 said hollow tube toward said first end.

1 19. The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of:  
2 (g) collapsing one or more said sections of said second end of said hollow tube  
3 causing said sections to overlap on top of each other in response to external pressure exerted  
on said hollow tube.